

rely on detailed analysis of these categories for conclusions about downtown retailing in general.

The General Merchandise* category includes department stores (such as Belk's) and variety stores (Roses), and also small general stores which serve rural communities from crossroad locations. Smithfield's share of Johnston County General Merchandise sales increased by more than one-third between 1948 and 1954, and was somewhat lower in 1958.** In the Food Stores category, which includes supermarkets selling a substantial amount of nonfood items, a consistently decreasing number of Smithfield stores have had sales which increased both in absolute terms and as a share of Johnston County food stores' sales. Smithfield's share of the County's sales by stores in the wearing apparel, shoes, and accessories group fell from 55% in 1948 to about 40% in 1954 and 1958, and the number of stores in this category increased faster in the rest of Johnston County than it did in Smithfield. The remaining two of the five selected types of stores, furniture, household furnishings and appliances stores and drug stores show inconclusive trends. However, all of these data refer to relatively small groups of stores observed at three arbitrary points in time, a situation from which clear indications of trends cannot always be discerned. The Census of Business is the only source of firm data of this kind, but the last Census data reported was for 1958, almost five years ago. The conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that Smithfield stores generally maintained their traditional share

* The category and their names and definitions are taken from the U. S. Census of Business.

** Technical problems in the data processing as well as the great change in general economic conditions make it meaningless to carry these comparisons back to 1939 or 1929.